

DOS REVIEWED 12-Nov-2010: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

INFORMATIONSECRET/SENSITIVE REFER TO DOS

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FBI REVIEWED 09-Nov-2010: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: Malik Reportedly Reverses his Position

We have received an FBI telegram reporting an interview with Soviet UN Ambassador Malik in which he reverses the position he took two days ago regarding a new Geneva Conference. According to the man who interviewed him, John MacVane of ABC, Malik told him on the following day that "holding a Geneva Conference now would be unrealistic". MacVane further indicated that Malik did not say when it might be realistic to hold a Geneva Conference but that Malik did indicate "the Americans have to get out of Vietnam before anything much is going to happen".

MacVane's interview is embargoed until 11 o'clock tonight.

There are a number of possible explanations for this report:

1. That it is a false report. We consider this improbable but possible.
2. That Malik had misappoken the day before and was now correcting himself. We consider this highly unlikely.
3. That Hanoi has decided to reverse its position and that the Russians have to get back off their limb. This could have happened as a result of further developments in the power struggle in Hanoi or as a result of Chinese pressure. We know that Le Duan was in Peking just as Malik was making his statement, and the Chinese may simply have refused to go along.

If the latter explanation is correct, the picture it presents is that Hanoi policy at present lacks both cohesion and consistency. Eight days ago Le Duc Tho, leaving Paris, insisted that there would be no Indo-China settlement until Vietnam was first settled. Six days ago, VNA edited out this portion of his remarks when broadcasting the report of his farewell statement. Now, Malik again insists that Vietnam has to come first. Unless the

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situation in Cambodia is changing so quickly that the leadership has to adjust very rapidly to new developments, there must simply be considerable disagreement -- either in Hanoi or among its allies -- as to where to go from here. This leaves us with the same problem which we have faced since the death of Ho Chi Minh, of an apparent indecisiveness on the part of our adversaries.

Att.

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JHH:WRS:pmh 4/18/70